

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 12-17 are allowable and that claim 2 contains allowable subject matter.

Election of Claims

Applicant notes that claims 3-11 and 18-23, which were withdrawn from consideration in response to the Restriction Requirement dated December 3, 2002, have not been canceled. Accordingly, claims 3-11 and 18-23 are canceled in this reply without prejudice or disclaimer.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-23 are pending in this application. Claims 2 and 12 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 12. As noted above, claims 3-11 and 18-23 are canceled as being drawn toward a non-elected invention. Further, claim 1 is canceled in this reply without prejudice or disclaimer, and claim 2 has been rewritten in independent form. Claim 2 has also been amended to clarify the present invention recited. In addition, claim 17 has been amended to more fully claim the present invention. As support for amended claim 17 may be found in page 17 of the specification, no new matter has been added.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 112

Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite. Claim 2 has been amended in view of the Examiner's comments. In particular, the indefinite phrase "can be" has been replaced with the phrase "is." Further, as suggested by the Examiner, claim 2 has been rewritten in independent form and, thus, is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 102

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,621,635. Claim 1 has been canceled in this reply, and claim 2 has been rewritten in independent form, thereby incorporating the subject matter previously recited in claim 1.

Thus, this rejection is moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,098,364. As mentioned above, claim 1 has been canceled in this reply, rendering this rejection moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Canadian Patent No. 02290080. As mentioned above, claim 1 has been canceled in this reply, rendering this rejection moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply to be fully responsive to all outstanding issues and place this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, do not hesitate to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 06756.006001).

Respectfully submitted,

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